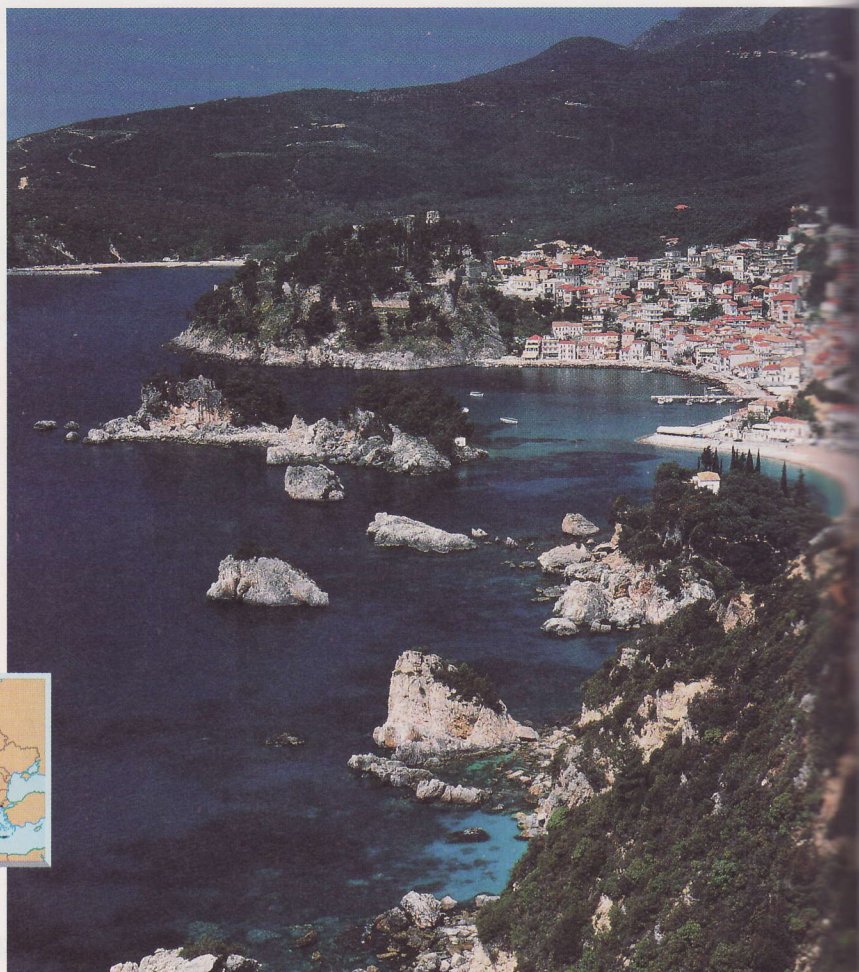


► Several typical geographic features appear in this picture of the northwestern coast of Greece. These features include a rocky coastline and rugged mountains. **Critical Thinking** How did the geographic features shown affect the way ancient people lived in this area?



Predict What effect do you think the geography of Greece had on the kind of communities that developed?

“land islands.” Mountains cut off these small communities from each other. The geography of Greece made it hard for people from different communities to get together.

For this reason, it is no surprise that ancient Greek communities thought of themselves as separate countries. Each one developed its own customs and beliefs. Each believed its own land, traditions, and way of life were the best. And each was more than ready to go to war to protect itself. In fact, for most of their history, the Greeks were so busy fighting among themselves that it is easy to forget that they shared a common heritage, spoke the same language, and worshipped the same gods.

Greek Beginnings

All Greeks shared a wealth of stories and myths about their origins. The myths explained the creation of the universe and the features of nature. They described the adventures of Greek heroes and gods. Various stories told how cities and traditions came to be.

Some of the most important stories told were about the Trojan War, a long struggle between Greece and the city of Troy on the west coast of Asia Minor. All the great heroes from both regions joined in the war.